



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802
340-774-0001

WORLD AIDS DAY 2012

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

A PROCLAMATION

The Joint United Nations Program (UNAIDS) observes December 1 of each year as *World AIDS Day*, a day to expand and strengthen worldwide efforts to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The campaign for 2012 is *Getting to Zero* with a goal of zero new infections by 2015.

World AIDS Day is a day to remember those who have been lost to this deadly disease and give compassion and hope to those who live courageously with HIV/AIDS every day. It is important that we continue to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention in order to help prevent further spread of this disease. Part of an effective response is to help collaborative partners work together nationally and internationally to prevent the spread of HIV. The goal of the Virgin Islands Department of Health and community based agencies funded to increase public awareness about how AIDS is spread.

World AIDS Day provides an opportunity to focus local, national and international attention on HIV infection and AIDS and to disseminate information on how to prevent the spread of HIV. The global epidemic of HIV infection and AIDS requires a worldwide effort to increase communication, education and a united action to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The goal of the Virgin Islands Department of Health and community based agencies funded by the federal government is to increase awareness about how HIV is spread. The Government of the Virgin Islands as well as key policymakers should make every effort to meet the targets they have agreed to in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

According to the Virgin Islands Department of Health HIV Surveillance Report for 2011, the number of people living with HIV infection in the U.S. Virgin Islands has increased by 18%

between 2008 and 2011. Approximately 579 adults, adolescents, and children were living with HIV infection in the U.S. Virgin Islands at the end of 2011. Typically, the majority of persons diagnosed with HIV are between 25 to 44 years old at time of diagnosis. However, persons 50 and over account for 41% of persons living with HIV in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Individuals 40 to 49 years of age account for 35% of persons living with HIV in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Between 2008 and 2011, an average of 11 persons infected with HIV/AIDS died each year. It is estimated that more than 39.5 million people are infected with HIV/AIDS worldwide including 2.5 million children; and more than 20 million people have died of HIV/AIDS since 1981 when it was first diagnosed.

Poverty, instability, infidelity, intravenous drug use, co-infection with other STD's, violence, lack of access to adequate health care and ignorance all contribute to the epidemic. Fear, shame, anger, ignorance and injustice worldwide are currently causing people living with HIV/AIDS unnecessary pain due to the stigma associated with the disease.

The American Association for World Health is encouraging a better understanding of the challenge of HIV/AIDS nationally as it recognizes that the number of people diagnosed with HIV and AIDS in the United States continues to increase every year; and among women, minorities – particularly African-Americans – having the vast majority of AIDS cases.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John P. de Jongh, Jr., Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, do hereby proclaim Thursday, December 1, 2012 as *World AIDS Day* in the United States Virgin Islands. I urge all citizens to take part in activities and observances designed to increase awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS in our community and as a global challenge, to take part in HIV/AIDS prevention activities and programs throughout the Territory, and to join in the global effort to prevent the further spread of HIV/AIDS.

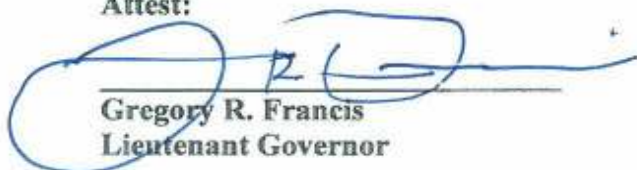
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands to be affixed at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, this 2nd day of November, A.D., 2012.





John P. deJongh, Jr.
Governor

Attest:



Gregory R. Francis
Lieutenant Governor